Mon Son Pa / Mon Hides a Cloth

Site of Documentation
Bangkok, Thailand

Description

Mon Hides a Cloth is a popular game of bluffing and chase, played by children living in Bangkok, Thailand. In the game, players have to guess if the cloth has been placed behind them. If it has, they have to quickly pick it up and chase their opponent, catching them before they make it back to their empty seat.

Who Plays?
This game requires a group of 10 or more participants. Both boys and girls can play aged 4 to 7 years old.

Accessories/Equipment
This game requires a piece of cloth. This can be anything readily available such as a scarf or T-shirt.

Time and Place
Mon Hides a Cloth can be played outdoors at any time of year, as long as the weather is cool and dry. On average, each game takes around 30 minutes making it is perfect for playing during school lunch breaks or on the weekends. As the game requires a lot of running, it is best played on smooth, flat surfaces such as lawns or school yards where the children are less likely to hurt themselves if they fall over.

Skill, Strategies and Qualities of a Good Player

As Mon Hides a Cloth is in part a guessing game, good players are often able to accurately read the faces and movements of their opponent while they are walking around the circle. After finding the cloth, players need to be fast runners if they are to catch the Mon and win the game. The Mon, while hiding their cloth, needs to be able to keep a straight face and bluff convincingly.

Popularity

Mon Hides a Cloth is a favourite game of children living in Bangkok and is played frequently during break times at school. Many schools also include this game in their educational curriculum and organize tournaments during events at special times of year such as Songkran (Thai New Year) and Children’s Day.

History of the Game

This game was also played by members of the older generations much in the same way as it’s played nowadays.

How is the Game Played?

Step 1. First, one player must volunteer to play the role of the “Mon”. Once chosen, the Mon must hold the piece of cloth in their hand and wait for the game to begin.
**Step 2.** All the other players must sit down in a large circle.

**Step 3.** Next, all the players sitting in the circle must sing, As they sing, the Mon must walk around the outside of the circle, behind the other players.
**Step 4.** The Mon must choose a player and without being seen, place the cloth behind the player’s back.

![Step 4](image1.png)

**Step 5.** Once the player has realized that cloth is behind their back, they must pick it up and quickly run around the circle and try to catch the Mon.

![Step 5](image2.png)
Step 6. If the player does not realize that the cloth has been placed behind them, the Mon must keep walking round the circle and when they reach that same player a second time, they can pick up the cloth and hit the player with it.

Step 7. Once hit, the player has to swap places with the Mon and the game begins again.
Step 8. However, if the player runs fast enough and catches the Mon they win the game.

Step 9. While being chased by the other player, the Mon has to try to make it back to the empty space left by the other player. If they make it back, they win the game. The loser of the game always plays the role of the Mon in the next round.

Rules

1. Players are not allowed to turn around to look behind them or use their hands to see (or feel) if the cloth is there. They must simply try to guess by looking at their team mates reactions to the Mon’s movements.
2. Players are not allowed to tell team mates that the cloth is behind them.
3. The loser always plays the Mon in the next round.